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The Hidden Power And Other Papers upon Mental Science

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THE
HIDDEN POWER
And Other Papers Upon Mental Science

BY

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The material comprised in this volume has been selected from unpublished manuscripts and magazine articles by Judge Troward, and "The Hidden Power" is, it is believed, the last book which will be published under his name. Only an insignificant portion of his work has been deemed unworthy of permanent preservation. Whenever possible, dates have been affixed to these papers. Those published in 1902 appeared originally in "EXPRESSION: A Journal of Mind and Thought," in London, and to some of these have been added notes made later by the author.

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THE HIDDEN POWER AND OTHER ESSAYS

I

The Hidden Power

To realise fully how much of our present daily life consists in symbols is to find the answer to the old, old question, What is Truth? and in the degree in which we begin to recognise this we begin to approach Truth. The realisation of Truth consists in the ability to translate symbols, whether natural or conventional, into their equivalents; and the root of all the errors of mankind consists in the inability to do this, and in maintaining that the symbol has nothing behind it. The great duty incumbent on all who have attained to this knowledge is to impress upon their fellow men that there is an *inner side* to things, and that until this *inner side* is known, the things themselves are not known.

There is an inner and an outer side to everything; and the quality of the superficial mind which causes it to fail in the attainment of Truth is its willingness to rest content with the outside only. So long as this is the case it is impossible for a man to grasp the import [2] of his own relation to the universal, and it is this relation which constitutes all that is signified by the word "Truth." So long as a man fixes his attention only on the superficial it is impossible for him to make any progress in knowledge. He is denying that principle of "Growth" which is the root of all life, whether spiritual intellectual, or material, for he does not stop to reflect that all which he sees as the outer side of things can result only from some germinal principle hidden deep in the centre of their being.

Expansion from the centre by growth according to a necessary order of sequence, this is the Law of Life of which the whole universe is the outcome, alike in the one great solidarity of cosmic being, as in the separate individualities of its minutest organisms. This great principle is the key to the whole riddle of Life, upon whatever plane we contemplate it; and without this key the door from the outer to the inner side of things can never be opened. It is therefore the duty of all to whom this door has, at least in some measure, been opened, to endeavour to acquaint others with the fact that there is an inner side to things, and that life becomes truer and fuller

in proportion as we penetrate to it and make our estimates of all things according to what becomes visible from this interior point of view.

In the widest sense everything is a symbol of that which constitutes its inner being, and all Nature is a gallery of arcana revealing great truths to those who [3] can decipher them. But there is a more precise sense in which our current life is based upon symbols in regard to the most important subjects that can occupy our thoughts: the symbols by which we strive to represent the nature and being of God, and the manner in which the life of man is related to the Divine life. The whole character of a man's life results from what he really believes on this subject: not his formal statement of belief in a particular creed, but what he realises as the stage which his mind has actually attained in regard to it.

Has a man's mind only reached the point at which he thinks it is impossible to know anything about God, or to make any use of the knowledge if he had it? Then his whole interior world is in the condition of confusion, which must necessarily exist where no spirit of order has yet begun to move upon the chaos in which are, indeed, the elements of being, but all disordered and neutralising one another. Has he advanced a step further, and realised that there is a ruling and an ordering power, but beyond this is ignorant of its nature? Then the unknown stands to him for the terrific, and, amid a tumult of fears and distresses that deprive him of all strength to advance, he spends his life in the endeavour to propitiate this power as something naturally adverse to him, instead of knowing that it is the very centre of his own life and being.

And so on through every degree, from the lowest depths of ignorance to the greatest heights of intelli [4] gence, a man's life must always be the exact reflection of that particular stage which he has reached in the perception of the divine nature and of his own relation to it; and as we approach the full perception of Truth, so the life-principle within us expands, the old bonds and limitations which had no existence in reality fall off from us, and we enter into regions of light, liberty, and power, of which we had previously no conception. It is impossible, therefore, to overestimate the importance of being able to realise the symbol *for* a symbol, and being

able to penetrate to the inner substance which it represents. Life itself is to be realised only by the conscious experience of its livingness in ourselves, and it is the endeavour to translate these experiences into terms which shall suggest a corresponding idea to others that gives rise to all symbolism.

The nearer those we address have approached to the actual experience, the more transparent the symbol becomes; and the further they are from such experience the thicker is the veil; and our whole progress consists in the fuller and fuller translation of the symbols into clearer and clearer statements of that for which they stand. But the first step, without which all succeeding ones must remain impossible, is to convince people that symbols *are* symbols, and not the very Truth itself. And the difficulty consists in this, that if the symbolism is in any degree adequate it must, in some measure, represent the form of Truth, [5] just as the modelling of a drapery suggests the form of the figure beneath. They have a certain consciousness that somehow they are in the presence of Truth; and this leads people to resent any removal of those folds of drapery which have hitherto conveyed this idea to their minds.

There is sufficient indication of the inner Truth in the outward form to afford an excuse for the timorous, and those who have not sufficient mental energy to think for themselves, to cry out that finality has already been attained, and that any further search into the matter must end in the destruction of Truth. But in raising such an outcry they betray their ignorance of the very nature of Truth, which is that it can never be destroyed: the very fact that Truth is Truth makes this impossible. And again they exhibit their ignorance of the first principle of Life—namely, the Law of Growth, which throughout the universe perpetually pushes forward into more and more vivid forms of expression, having expansion everywhere and finality nowhere.

Such ignorant objections need not, therefore, alarm us; and we should endeavour to show those who make them that what they fear is the only natural order of the Divine Life, which is "over all, and through all, and in all." But we must do this gently, and not by forcibly thrusting upon them the object of their terror, and so repelling them from all study of the subject. We should endeavour grad-

ually to lead them to see [6] that there is something interior to what they have hitherto held to be ultimate Truth, and to realise that the sensation of emptiness and dissatisfaction, which from time to time will persist in making itself felt in their hearts, is nothing else than the pressing forward of the spirit within to declare that inner side of things which alone can satisfactorily account for what we observe on the exterior, and without the knowledge of which we can never perceive the true nature of our inheritance in the Universal Life which is the Life Everlasting.

II

What, then, is this central principle which is at the root of all things? It is Life. But not life as we recognise it in particular forms of manifestation; it is something more interior and concentrated than that. It is that "unity of the spirit" which *is* unity, simply because it has not yet passed into diversity. Perhaps this is not an easy idea to grasp, but it is the root of all scientific conception of spirit; for without it there is no common principle to which we can refer the innumerable forms of manifestation that spirit assumes.

It is the conception of Life as the sum-total of all its undistributed powers, being as yet none of these in particular, but all of them in potentiality. This is, no doubt, a highly abstract idea, but it is essentially that of the centre from which growth takes place by [7] expansion in every direction. This is that last residuum which defies all our powers of analysis. This is truly "the unknowable," not in the sense of the unthinkable but of the unanalysable. It is the subject of perception, not of knowledge, if by knowledge we mean that faculty which estimates the *relations* between things, because here we have passed beyond any questions of relations, and are face to face with the absolute.

This innermost of all is absolute Spirit. It is Life as yet not differentiated into any specific mode; it is the universal Life which pervades all things and is at the heart of all appearances.

To come into the knowledge of this is to come into the secret of power, and to enter into the secret place of Living Spirit. Is it illogical first to call this the unknowable, and then to speak of coming into the knowledge of it? Perhaps so; but no less a writer than St. Paul has set the example; for does he not speak of the final result of all searchings into the heights and depths and lengths and breadths of the inner side of things as being, to attain the knowledge of that Love which passeth knowledge. If he is thus boldly illogical in phrase, though not in fact, may we not also speak of knowing "the unknowable"? We may, for this knowledge is the root of all other knowledge.

The presence of this undifferentiated universal life-power is the final axiomatic fact to which all our [8] analysis must ultimately conduct us. On whatever plane we make our analysis it must always abut upon pure essence, pure energy, pure being; that which knows itself and recognises itself, but which cannot dissect itself because it is not built up of parts, but is ultimately integral: it is pure Unity. But analysis which does not lead to synthesis is merely destructive: it is the child wantonly pulling the flower to pieces and throwing away the fragments; not the botanist, also pulling the flower to pieces, but building up in his mind from those carefully studied fragments a vast synthesis of the constructive power of Nature, embracing the laws of the formation of all flower-forms. The value of analysis is to lead us to the original starting-point of that which we analyse, and so to teach us the laws by which its final form springs from this centre.

Knowing the law of its construction, we turn our analysis into a synthesis, and we thus gain a power of building up which must always be beyond the reach of those who regard "the unknowable" as one with "not-being."

This idea of the unknowable is the root of all materialism; and yet no scientific man, however materialistic his proclivities, treats the unanalysable residuum thus when he meets it in the experiments of his laboratory. On the contrary, he makes this final unanalysable fact the basis of his synthesis. He finds that in the last resort it is energy of some kind, whether [9] as heat or as motion; but he does not throw up his scientific pursuits because he cannot analyse it further. He adopts the precisely opposite course, and realises that the conservation of energy, its indestructibility, and the impossibility of adding to or detracting from the sum-total of energy in the world, is the one solid and unchanging fact on which alone the edifice of physical science can be built up. He bases all his knowledge upon his knowledge of "the unknowable." And rightly so, for if he could analyse this energy into yet further factors, then the same problem of "the unknowable" would meet him still. All our progress consists in continually pushing the unknowable, in the sense of the unanalysable residuum, a step further back; but that there should be no ultimate unanalysable residuum anywhere is an inconceivable idea.

In thus realising the undifferentiated unity of Living Spirit as the central fact of any system, whether the system of the entire universe or of a single organism, we are therefore following a strictly scientific method. We pursue our analysis until it necessarily leads us to this final fact, and then we accept this fact as the basis of our synthesis. The Science of Spirit is thus not one whit less scientific than the Science of Matter; and, moreover, it starts from the same initial fact, the fact of a living energy which defies definition or explanation, wherever we find it; but it differs from the science of matter in that it contemplates this energy under an aspect of responsive [10] intelligence which does not fall within the scope of physical science, as such. The Science of Spirit and the Science of Matter are not opposed. They are complementaries, and neither is fully comprehensible without some knowledge of the other; and, being really but two portions of one whole, they insensibly shade off into each other in a border-land where no arbitrary line can be drawn between them. Science studied in a truly scientific spirit, following out its own deductions unflinchingly to their legitimate conclusions, will always reveal the twofold aspect of things, the inner and the outer; and it is only a truncated and maimed science that refuses to recognise both.

The study of the material world is not Materialism, if it be allowed to progress to its legitimate issue. Materialism is that limited view of the universe which will not admit the existence of anything but mechanical effects of mechanical causes, and a system which recognises no higher power than the physical forces of nature must logically result in having no higher ultimate appeal than to physical force or to fraud as its alternative. I speak, of course, of the tendency of the system, not of the morality of individuals, who are often very far in advance of the systems they profess. But as we would avoid the propagation of a mode of thought whose effects history shows only too plainly, whether in the Italy of the Borgias, or the France of the First Revolution, or the Commune of the Franco-Prussian War, we should set ourselves to [11] study that inner and spiritual aspect of things which is the basis of a system whose logical results are truth and love instead of perfidy and violence.

Some of us, doubtless, have often wondered why the Heavenly Jerusalem is described in the Book of Revelations as a cube; "the

length and the breadth and the height of it are equal." This is because the cube is the figure of perfect stability, and thus represents Truth, which can never be overthrown. Turn it on what side you will, it still remains the perfect cube, always standing upright; you cannot upset it. This figure, then, represents the manifestation in concrete solidity of that central life-giving energy, which is not itself any one plane but generates all planes, the planes of the above and of the below and of all four sides. But it is at the same time a city, a place of habitation; and this is because that which is "the within" is Living Spirit, which has its dwelling there.

As one plane of the cube implies all the other planes and also "the within," so any plane of manifestation implies the others and also that "within" which generates them all. Now, if we would make any progress in the spiritual side of science—and *every* department of science has its spiritual side—we must always keep our minds fixed upon this "innermost within" which contains the potential of all outward manifestation, the "fourth dimension" which generates the cube; and our common forms of speech show how intuitively we do this. We speak of the spirit in which an act is done, [12] of entering into the spirit of a game, of the spirit of the time, and so on. Everywhere our intuition points out the spirit as the true essence of things; and it is only when we commence arguing about them from without, instead of from within, that our true perception of their nature is lost.

The scientific study of spirit consists in following up intelligently and according to definite method the same principle that now only flashes upon us at intervals fitfully and vaguely. When we once realise that this universal and unlimited power of spirit is at the root of all things and of ourselves also, then we have obtained the key to the whole position; and, however far we may carry our studies in spiritual science, we shall nowhere find anything else but particular developments of this one universal principle. "The Kingdom of Heaven is *within* you."

III

I have laid stress on the fact that the "innermost within" of all things is living Spirit, and that the Science of Spirit is distinguished from the Science of Matter in that it contemplates Energy under an aspect of responsive intelligence which does not fall within the scope of physical science, as such. These are the two great points to lay hold of if we would retain a clear idea of Spiritual Science, and not be misled by arguments drawn from the physical side of Science [13] only – the livingness of the originating principle which is at the heart of all things, and its intelligent and responsive nature. Its livingness is patent to our observation, at any rate from the point where we recognise it in the vegetable kingdom; but its intelligence and responsiveness are not, perhaps, at once so obvious. Nevertheless, a little thought will soon lead us to recognise this also.

No one can deny that there is an intelligent order throughout all nature, for it requires the highest intelligence of our most highly-trained minds to follow the steps of this universal intelligence which is always in advance of them. The more deeply we investigate the world we live in, the more clear it must become to us that all our science is the translation into words or numerical symbols of that order which already exists. If the clear statement of this existing order is the highest that the human intellect can reach, this surely argues a corresponding intelligence in the power which gives rise to this great sequence of order and interrelation, so as to constitute one harmonious whole. Now, unless we fall back on the idea of a workman working upon material external to himself – in which case we have to explain the phenomenon of the workman – the only conception we can form of this power is that it is the Living Spirit inherent in the heart of every atom, giving it outward form and definition, and becoming in it those intrinsic polarities which constitute its characteristic nature.

[14]

There is no random work here. Every attraction and repulsion acts with its proper force collecting the atoms into molecules, the molecules into tissues, the tissues into organs, and the organs into individuals. At each stage of the progress we get the sum of the

intelligent forces which operate in the constituent parts, *plus* a higher degree of intelligence which we may regard as the collective intelligence superior to that of the mere sum-total of the parts, something which belongs to the individual *as a whole*, and not to the parts as such. These are facts which can be amply proved from physical science; and they also supply a great law in spiritual science, which is that in any collective body the intelligence of the whole is superior to that of the sum of the parts.

Spirit is at the root of all things, and thoughtful observation shows that its operation is guided by unfailing intelligence which adapts means to ends, and harmonises the entire universe of manifested being in those wonderful ways which physical science renders clearer every day; and this intelligence must be in the generating spirit itself, because there is no other source from which it could proceed. On these grounds, therefore, we may distinctly affirm that Spirit is intelligent, and that whatever it does is done by the intelligent adaptation of means to ends.

But Spirit is also responsive. And here we have to fall back upon the law above stated, that the mere sum of the intelligence of Spirit in lower degrees of [15] manifestation is not equal to the intelligence of the complex *whole*, as a whole. This is a radical law which we cannot impress upon our minds too deeply. The degree of spiritual intelligence is marked by the wholeness of the organism through which it finds expression; and therefore the more highly organised being has a degree of spirit which is superior to, and consequently capable of exercising control over, all lower or less fully-integrated degrees of spirit; and this being so, we can now begin to see why the spirit that is the "innermost within" of all things is responsive as well as intelligent.

Being intelligent, it *knows*, and spirit being ultimately all there is, that which it knows is itself. Hence it is that power which recognises itself; and accordingly the lower powers of it recognise its higher powers, and by the law of attraction they are bound to respond to the higher degrees of themselves. On this general principle, therefore, spirit, under whatever exterior revealed, is necessarily intelligent and responsive. But intelligence and responsiveness imply personality; and we may therefore now advance a step further and

argue that *all* spirit contains the elements of personality, even though, in any particular instance, it may not yet be expressed as that individual personality which we find in ourselves.

In short, spirit is always personal in its nature, even when it has not yet attained to that degree of synthesis which is sufficient to render it personal [16] in manifestation. In ourselves the synthesis has proceeded far enough to reach that degree, and therefore we recognise ourselves as the manifestation of personality. The human kingdom is the kingdom of the manifestation of that personality, which is of the essence of spiritual substance on every plane. Or, to put the whole argument in a simpler form, we may say that our own personality must necessarily have had its origin in that which is personal, on the principle that you cannot get more out of a bag than it contains.

In ourselves, therefore, we find that more perfect synthesis of the spirit into manifested personality which is wanting in the lower kingdoms of nature, and, accordingly, since spirit is necessarily that which knows itself and must, therefore, recognise its own degrees in its various modes, the spirit in all degrees below that of human personality is bound to respond to itself in that superior degree which constitutes human individuality; and this is the basis of the power of human thought to externalise itself in infinite forms of its own ordering.

But if the subordination of the lower degrees of spirit to the higher is one of the fundamental laws which lie at the bottom of the creative power of thought, there is another equally fundamental law which places a salutary restraint upon the abuse of that power. It is the law that we can command the powers of the universal for our own purposes only [17] in proportion as we first realise and obey their generic character. We can employ water for any purpose which does not require it to run up-hill, and we can utilise electricity for any purpose that does not require it to pass from a lower to a higher potential.

So with that universal power which we call the Spirit. It has an inherent generic character with which we must comply if we would employ it for our specific purposes, and this character is summed up in the one word "goodness." The Spirit is Life, hence its generic

tendency must always be lifeward or to the increase of the livingness of every individual. And since it is universal it can have no particular interests to serve, and therefore its action must always be equally for the benefit of all. This is the generic character of spirit; and just as water, or electricity, or any other of the physical forces of the universe, will not work contrary to their generic character, so Spirit will not work contrary to its generic character.

The inference is obvious. If we would use Spirit we must follow the law of the Spirit which is "Goodness." This is the only limitation. If our originating intention is good, we may employ the spiritual power for what purpose we will. And how is "goodness" to be defined? Simply by the child's definition that what is bad is not good, and that what is good is not bad; we all know the difference between bad and good instinctively. If we will conform to this principle of obedience to the generic law of the Spirit, all [18] that remains is for us to study the law of the proportion which exists between the more and less fully integrated modes of Spirit, and then bring our knowledge to bear with determination.

IV

The law of spirit, to which our investigation has now led us, is of the very widest scope. We have followed it up from the conception of the intelligence of spirit, subsisting in the initial atoms, to the aggregation of this intelligence as the conscious identity of the individual. But there is no reason why this law should cease to operate at this point, or at any point short of the whole. The test of the soundness of any principle is that it can operate as effectively on a large scale as on a small one, that though the nature of its field is determined by the nature of the principle itself, the extent of its field is unlimited. If, therefore, we continue to follow up the law we have been considering, it leads us to the conception of a unit of intelligence as far superior to that of the individual man as the unity of his individual intelligence is superior to that of the intelligence of any single atom of his body; and thus we may conceive of a collective individuality representing the spiritual character of any aggregate of men, the inhabitants of a city, a district, a country, or of the entire world.

[19]

Nor need the process stop here. On the same principle there would be a superior collective individuality for the humanity of the entire solar system, and finally we reach the conception of a supreme intelligence bringing together in itself the collective individualities of all the systems in the universe. This is by no means a merely fanciful notion. We find it as the law by which our own conscious individuality is constituted; and we find the analogous principle working universally on the physical plane. It is known to physical science as the "law of inverse squares," by which the forces of reciprocal attraction or repulsion, as the case may be, are not merely equivalent to the sum of the forces emitted by the two bodies concerned, but are equivalent to these two forces multiplied together and divided by the square of the distance between them, so that the resultant power continually rises in a rapidly-increasing ratio as the two reciprocally exciting bodies approach one another.

Since this law is so universal throughout physical nature, the doctrine of continuity affords every ground for supposing that its ana-

logue holds good in respect of spiritual nature. We must never lose sight of the old-world saying that "a truth on one plane is a truth on all." If a principle exists at all it exists universally. We must not allow ourselves to be misled by appearances; we must remember that the perceptible results of the working of any principle consist of two factors—the principle itself or the active factor, and the [20] subject-matter on which it acts or the passive factor; and that while the former is invariable, the latter is variable, and that the operation of the same invariable upon different variables must necessarily produce a variety of results. This at once becomes evident if we state it mathematically; for example, a , b or c , multiplied by x give respectively the results ax , bx , cx , which differ materially from one another, though the factor x always remains the same.

This law of the generation of power by attraction applies on the spiritual as well as on the physical plane, and acts with the same mathematical precision on both; and thus the human individuality consists, not in the mere aggregation of its parts, whether spiritual or corporeal, but in the *unity* of power resulting from the intimate association into which those parts enter with one another, which unity, according to this law of the generation of power by attraction, is infinitely superior, both in intelligence and power, to any less fully integrated mode of spirit. Thus a natural principle, common alike to physical and spiritual law, fully accounts for all claims that have ever been made for the creative power of our thought over all things that come within the circle of our own particular life. Thus it is that each man is the centre of his own universe, and has the power, by directing his own thought, to control all things therein.

But, as I have said above, there is no reason why this principle should not be recognised as expanding [21] from the individual until it embraces the entire universe. Each man, as the centre of his own world, is himself centred in a higher system in which he is only one of innumerable similar atoms, and this system again in a higher until we reach the supreme centre of all things; intelligence and power increase from centre to centre in a ratio rising with inconceivable rapidity, according to the law we are now investigating, until they culminate in illimitable intelligence and power commensurate with All-Being.